SPEECH

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES-JAMES FOX.

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RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES-JAMES FOX,

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

On FRIDAY, the 4th of JANUARY, 1798,

ON THE

ASSESSED-TAX BILL.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A LETTER from the Earl of MOIRA

To Lieutenant-Colonel M'MAHON.

LONDON:

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RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES-JAMES FOX.

MR. FOX roſe, and ſpoke in ſubſtance as follows:—It gives me pain that I am obliged to riſe at ſo late an hour, and that I ſhall be under the neceſſity of treſpaſſing on the time of the Houſe for a conſiderable while, but, from the very peculiar ſituation in which I ſtand, it is unavoidable—charges of the moſt direct and perſonal nature have been made againſt me, and I am ſorry I have not heard the whole of them. I underſtand that in my abſence, on former occaſions, as well as during the debate of laſt night, charges and inſinuations have been thrown out; and a very conſiderable part of the debate this evening has been applied perſonally to me. The gentleman who ſpoke laſt (Mr. Wilberforce) has made a ſpeech which is a little ſingular in its turn at the commencement, when compared to what followed: he lamented the miſchiefs, was alarmed, it ſeems, to almoſt a fatal degree, at the probable effect of my introducing into almoſt every debate in which I happen to take a ſhare, party diſputes and perſonal animoſities. How far his ſpeech was calculated to prevent that miſchief, is, I preſume, a point that needs no argument. Indeed, if that ſpeech could be diſpoſed of, as we do ſometimes with bills in this Houſe; that is, if the preamble of it could be poſtponed, it might, by going into a Committee upon it, be proved to be one of the moſt extraordinary performances that ever was exhibited in this Houſe. I return, it ſeems, to ſhew my animoſity againſt the Miniſter, not to ſhew any zeal for the public good. He thinks himſelf juſtifiable in arraigning me, as it were upon a bill of indictment for neglect of duty, and being a candidate for office. He is pleaſed to cenſure, not Members generally for their conduct, but particular individuals, whom he chuſes to ſuppoſe are candidates for office. Does he know that I am a candidate for office? Does he know who are candidates for office? We arraign the Miniſters, it ſeems, not becauſe their meaſures are

bad, but becauſe we wiſh to ſupplant them. Is he ſure of that? He ought to be ſo before he makes the aſſertion. Is he ſure there is any temptation for it? He ought to be well acquainted with our conduct before he ventures to throw forth ſuch accuſations. But who is he, and who are his connections? upon what grounds of juſtice or of modeſty does he aſſert that he has any knowledge of the motives, or the ſecret wiſhes of thoſe into whoſe company he is never admitted, whoſe confidence he never poſſeſſed? Upon what authority does he make his accuſations? Upon what foundation does he reſt his unqualified aſſertions? He is connected with other individuals; and to ſerve them, as he ſuppoſes, rather than touch upon the contents of a bill which he cannot ſupport, he changes the ſubject of debate from the bill to that of the conduct of individuals, for the purpoſe of diverting the Houſe from the diſcuſſion of the meaſure which is now before them. He chuſes to ſay we are candidates for office; I do not know whether he is not a candidate: I am ſure he cannot know whether I am ſo or not. He ſeems to feel quite at his eaſe in deciding, not merely on the characters of men, but alſo upon the degree of public confidence they poſſeſs. He dares take upon himſelf to ſay who has and who has not the confidence of the public; and that with as much eaſe as if he had certain means of knowing the fact. He aſſerts, roundly, that the public have a bad opinion of us—Who has commiſſioned him to ſay ſo? From what ſociety, from what company, of which he is a member, has the fact been communicated to him? Is it from his friends on the Treaſury bench? When he talks of me in the manner that he does, he ought to be ſure that he is borne out by ſomething that has the colour, at leaſt, of truth. I do not like, Sir, to talk of myſelf, but he has made it a duty which is unpleaſant to me, as I hope it is uncommon to all men. I am a Member of a City, in all reſpects important; in ſome reſpect, and particularly from the aſpect of this bill, the moſt important in this kingdom, becauſe the inhabitants of that city are to be more cruelly harraſſed by the enactments of it than any other claſs of perſons upon whom it will operate. Does he mean to ſay that the opinion which he has been pleaſed to deliver concerning me, is the opinion of my conſtituents? Will he try it by the beſt teſt, by the reſult of a general meeting of my conſtituents convened, after due notice, for the expreſs purpoſe of deliberating on the preſent meaſure? Will he take it from their parochial meetings? He preſumes to ſay, that there are Members in this Houſe who are arrogant. Sir, I truſt it is not my general character to be remarkably arrogant, although I know he intended to direct that inſinuation towards me; but I

will ſay now, ſince he drives me to it, that I am aware I am ſent into this Houſe with more of the affection of my conſtituents than either himſelf, or any of thoſe who ſit around him; that there is not in this Houſe one man who has more of the affection of his conſtituents than the Member who has now the honour of addreſſing you. I refer to thoſe who know me beſt, and who know me certainly much better than the honourable Member can pretend to do, to vouch for me in this particular. They have done it in the moſt explicit manner; they are ready to do it again if that ſhould be thought neceſſary. "The people of this country have an ill opinion of me!" Where has he collected that fact? It has been quite otherwiſe expreſſed by thoſe who are, at leaſt, full as capable of judging of the matter as he is, for much of my labour has been employed in their ſervice. Has he found any thing any where which indicates that the public at large are diſpleaſed with my conduct? But he ſpeaks the language, or rather the common cant of the Majority of this Houſe, the drift of which, he will pardon me, I think I underſtand as well as he does. It is a cant which has no connection with the ſentiments of the people. Some men in this Houſe ſay, that Miniſters have the full confidence of the people. Were I to follow the examples that are ſet before me, I might ſay that the public have a very ill opinion of theſe ſame Miniſters. Sir, I never intended to be deficient in the duty I owe the Sovereign; but how many times more frequently within the laſt year than I ſhould have had occaſion to attend the Levee have I been called upon by different deſcriptions of his ſubjects to preſent to His Majeſty petitions for the removal of his preſent Miniſters, and that too from ſome of the moſt important diſtricts in His Majeſty's dominions? By theſe petitions, not the general *confidence*, but the general *diffidence* of the people in the preſent Miniſters has been unequivocally expreſſed. Let thoſe who doubt this, if, indeed, there be any who doubt it, refer to the tranſactions of the laſt Summer over ſo large a part of His Majeſty's dominions. I may be told, I know I may, "that petitions againſt Miniſters are nothing to this Houſe; that it will judge for itſelf, and it confides ſtill in the Miniſters." This is the faſhionable language of the day, nor could any thing elſe be expected after the repeal of the Bill of Rights: hence we ſee that petitions againſt any branch of executive authority are regarded as nothing; thoſe that are for any part of it, every thing. But if after the repeal of the Bill of Rights, for the ſubſtance of it is repealed; if after all the diſadvantages which the people labour under, they will nevertheleſs expreſs a general opinion againſt Miniſters; I aſk, is it not clear that ſuch is a ſincere

opinion? If, under all the difficulties that are now thrown in the way of thoſe who meet to deliberate on any public affairs, men will meet, and declare their ſentiments to be hoſtile to thoſe who have ſo much power to injure them, what would they not do if left, as heretofore, to their own free will? We have now, indeed, a form of Government, conſiſting of King, Lords, and Commons' Houſe of Parliament, but not a Government, conſiſting of King, Lords, and the Commons, Repreſentatives of the People of Great Britain. It is a Government in which the power of the People is nothing; and ſo it is, indeed, the faſhion now to admit, for we never hear now of an *actual*, all is a *virtual*, Repreſentation of the People; conſequently we find daily, that Members of this Houſe ſpeak and vote in direct oppoſition to the inſtructions of their conſtituents; of which we had a ſtriking inſtance the other day in the conduct of a worthy Alderman of the city of London, who thought fit to declare, that in voting for the bill now before the Houſe, he was confident he was voting according to the deſire of his conſtituents. Who are his conſtituents? The Livery of the city of London. What has been the conduct of that Livery? In Common-hall aſſembled they voted an Addreſs to His Majeſty to diſmiſs his preſent Miniſters from his Councils. That worthy Alderman has ſince continually ſupported theſe Miniſters in this Houſe. The Court of Common Council unanimouſly reſolve againſt the principle of this bill. The body of the Livery in Common-hall declare the ſame ſentiments, and all the inhabitants of the different wards in the city concur unanimouſly in theſe ſentiments—they all inſtruct their Repreſentatives in Parliament to oppoſe this bill—the worthy Alderman ſupports it. This is called the virtual Repreſentation of the People! Such is the conduct, I perceive, of many of the Members of this Houſe at the beginning of a Parliament; quite otherwiſe it is with moſt of them at the end of one. What was this but ſaying to the conſtituents, that their Member knew better than themſelves what their opinions were? What was this but following up the blow that had been already given to the right of petitioning? Not ſo the caſe with regard to petitions in the year 1784, when they came in aid of the power of the Crown. Whether the petitions that were then preſented were right or wrong, I am not now queſtioning; it is foreign to the ſubject; but it appears by the different receptions of them, and thoſe of the preſent time, that, in this Houſe, petitions in favour of the power of the Crown are to be conſidered as every thing; thoſe in favour of the Rights of the Subject, nothing. While the majority of this Houſe was *againſt* the proceedings of the King's Miniſters, it was nothing, and the petitions of the People againſt it

was every thing. When the majority of this Houſe is *for* the King's Miniſters, it is every thing; the petitions of the People againſt them, nothing. I proteſt I cannot account for this in any other way than that of ſuppoſing that there is a ſettled plan to exalt the Prerogatives of the Crown, and to reduce the Rights of the People to a cypher. Nay, is it not already done? What is the condition of the Prerogative, or rather the influence of the Miniſter, at this moment? and what is the power of the People? I proteſt I cannot account for the turn which this debate has taken; I cannot account for the violent invectives that have been urged againſt me, eſpecially this night, upon any other principle than that to which I have already alluded. Why ſhould the honourable gentleman who ſpoke laſt (Mr. Wilberforce) be ſo violent againſt me, who have had the good fortune to agree with him in many ſubjects that were introduced into this Houſe by himſelf? How, but by ſuppoſing that he lends himſelf as an inſtrument to the Miniſter, to do any thing that he thinks will ſerve his inſtructor, and therefore he attempts now to divert the attention of the public from the ſubject of the preſent bill, to thoſe points which he chuſes to ſtate as my political defects. He imputes to me now, an eagerneſs for office, with juſt as much juſtice as, in the year 1784, he lent himſelf as an inſtrument to the Miniſter to ſay, and to prevail upon the People of this country, and eſpecially thoſe of Yorkſhire, to believe, that I was deſirous to ſeize upon all power, and that finally I aimed at ſitting upon the Throne. By this ſort of conduct he has compelled me to-night to ſpeak of myſelf as an individual; he has made it neceſſary alſo that I ſhould now ſpeak of another individual, and that is himſelf; and here I will declare, that I do not know a man in this Houſe who is ſo ready, upon all occaſions, to lend himſelf to Miniſters, to profeſs himſelf to believe what they profeſs to believe, to diſtruſt what they ſay they diſtruſt, or to alledge, for them, what he does not know to be true; or, in ſhort, to lend himſelf as a tool or inſtrument to Miniſters upon any occaſion in which they may call for his aſſiſtance. I ſay I know no man more ready to do all this than the honourable gentleman himſelf, and that for the moſt contemptible party purpoſes. I cannot help making this obſervation, it is the effect of his unqualified aſſertions. But he has lent himſelf to-night a little more to his inſtructors than upon any former occaſion. He inſinuated a great deal, or thought he did ſo, by ſpeaking againſt the doctrines which led to the worſt horrors that were produced in France, which, ſaid he, we all deplore, or all ſay we deplore. Does he think there is, within theſe walls, any man who, more ſincerely than myſelf, deplores thoſe horrors? I deplore

theſe horrors, but the inſinuation I do not deplore. He does not himſelf believe it; he cannot believe it. He lends himſelf a little too much to make inſinuations, for which he knows there is no foundation, merely to lower the perſonal opinion which the public may have of us; upon that ſubject I ſhould not have ſaid much, nor, indeed, any thing, if that honourable gentleman had not made it neceſſary. But an expreſſion fell laſt night from an honourable and learned gentleman (Doctor Laurence), of whom I ſhall ſpeak only in terms of reſpect, having formerly had the honour to be acquainted with him. He ſpoke of the Parliament in the time of Charles the Firſt. That Parliament, the learned gentleman admitted to have done a great number of good acts, although it afterwards ſtained its proceedings with an act of the moſt horrible injuſtice. Thus it appears that that learned gentleman can ſpeak well of thoſe acts which deſerve to be well ſpoken of, although they were the acts of thoſe who committed afterwards an act of regicide; but that is matter of hiſtory, and of which men of all parties can now judge coolly, becauſe their prejudices and paſſions are not now called into action upon the ſubject. If that learned gentleman had ſaid this of the Parliament of Charles I. in the reign of Charles II., no doubt but that his ſentiments would have been called rebellious, for it would have then been ſaid by the cavaliers that he approved of the death of the king. This would have been all the effect of prejudice, for nobody could ſuſpect that learned gentleman of any ſuch deſire as that of accompliſhing the death of the king. Such is the difference between matter of hiſtory and that which is paſſing before us.—That very learned gentleman, who could thus praiſe ſome of the acts of a regicide parliament, can make no allowance for thoſe who approve of the firſt principles that were maintained in France; they muſt be charged with the guilty deſire of abetting all the horrors that appeared ſince in that country, although, in reality, they deplore them as much as that learned gentleman can do. I do not blame that learned gentleman for approving of ſome of the acts of the Parliament of Charles I., for they laid the foundation of that glorious Revolution which aſſerted the liberties of England; but I think that the ſame allowance ſhould be made by him to us with regard to the firſt principles of the French Revolution; we certainly might approve of them, without approving of the horrors by which it has been followed up.—But when we ſpeak of hiſtory, we ſpeak coolly; when we ſpeak of events that are paſſing before us, we ſpeak of them with the blindneſs of prejudice.

I now come to complain a little of the conduct of an honourable and learned gentleman (Mr. Percival) who has made a very in-

nious ſpeech to night. I did not call him to order, although, perhaps, I might have done ſo with propriety; for much of his addreſs to the Houſe was irregular, but I abſtained from that, as I am deſirous to afford, to every Member, conſiderable latitude of expreſſion in all caſes; and I was the more ſo in this, becauſe he did me the honour to take notice of my public conduct. He applied his argument to what had occurred in a former debate, not upon this queſtion, but another. That is certainly diſorderly, but I do not complain of it, becauſe I think, that however uſeful order in debate may be ſometimes, it is neceſſary it ſhould give way in others. He complained of the ambiguity of my words on a former debate. Why did he not make the complaint earlier? Why take three weeks to make an epigram upon a ſentence in my ſpeech? If this would have been blameable in any man, how much more ſo was it in that learned gentleman, becauſe he adverted to my abſence from the Houſe, for he ſaid, "God knows whether I ſhall ſee that right honourable gentleman again until the next ſeſſion."—I think therefore he was bound, on his own principle, to take notice of my words (which it ſeems have alarmed him ſo much), immediately after they were ſpoken, for how did he know he ſhould ſee me again in this Houſe? He did not arraign the expreſſions when they were uttered, but now, at the end of three weeks, they recur to his memory with dreadful alarm!---I am now coming to theſe formidable words which have created this great alarm, but as I have already been accuſed of being an egotiſt, I muſt beg pardon of the Houſe for recurring to any thing I ſaid of myſelf, and I wiſh the learned gentleman had noticed them at the time, that I might have had an opportunity of explaining them if they were ambiguous, or correcting them if they were wrong. They were uttered, I remember, in anſwer to ſome inſinuation, "that I was a candidate for public employment," and, "was ambitious of public honours." I do not pretend to have a very good memory of the preciſe words of any man, eſpecially of my own, but I think the words I uſed were theſe---"That a radical reform both of the repreſentation of the people in Parliament, and of the abuſes that have crept into the practice of the Conſtitution of this country, together with a complete and fundamental change of ſyſtem of Adminiſtration, muſt take place, and that until it did, I, for one, would take no ſhare in any Adminiſtration, or be reſponſible in any office in His Majeſty's Councils." I think theſe were my words; I am ſure they were the ſubſtance of what I ſaid. Was there any explanation neceſſary? I am not very dexterous at any thing, but I ought to be ſo at explanations, and perhaps the learned

gentleman gives me credit for being ſo, becauſe he may think it impoſſible for a man who has been ſo often miſrepreſented as I have, not to have acquired ſome art in making his defence. I muſt confeſs it is an art in which I believe the right honourable gentleman oppoſite to me is my ſuperior, and that if I wiſhed to acquire perfection in that art, I ſhould, although the elder man, become the ſcholar of that right honourable gentleman. Was there any thing ambiguous in theſe words---" a radical reform ;" or, as the learned gentleman pleaſed to call it, " a fundamental and total change of the ſyſtem upon which our affairs have been carried on?" By a change of ſyſtem I meant, ſimply and clearly, to ſtate, that the empire ſhould be governed by a ſyſtem of liberty, inſtead of a ſyſtem of reſtraint. Is the ſenſe obſcure, or are the words ambiguous? Whether my opinion is right or wrong, is quite another queſtion. I ſay, that to increaſe the power of the Crown, and to abridge the liberties of the people, has been the ſyſtem of the preſent Adminiſtration. I ſay that it is a wrong ſyſtem. I ſay you ſhould diminiſh the power of the Crown, and increaſe the power of the people. I ſay you ſhould reſtore them to their juſt balance according to the true ſpirit of our Conſtitution. I ſay, that it is eſſential to the happineſs of the King and the people. I take it for granted that the words I uſed are now perfectly underſtood ; and I thought, at the time I uſed them, that inſtead of being liable to reproach, they merited quite another fate. What did I mean by a change of ſyſtem? What! exactly what Lord Chatham meant when he ſaid the ſame thing---" not merely a removal of Miniſters, but a fundamental change of ſyſtem upon conviction of paſt error." I meant what Lord Camelford meant when he declared, and that at a time when we were threatened with an invaſion, " I will not vote for a ſupply to be granted to His Majeſty now." What! was this an encouragement to the French to invade this country? No! no! He meant, and he expreſſed himſelf, that he would not vote for a ſupply, until a pledge was given him, not merely that Miniſters ſhould be removed, but that there ſhould be a complete change of ſyſtem in foreign and domeſtic Government. This ſpeech was much praiſed at the time, and has often been ſtated to be the ſpeech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was not ſo. It was the ſpeech of Mr. Thomas Pitt, afterwards Lord Camelford. I believe the preſent Chancellor of the Exchequer did not ſpeak in that debate, but we had the honour of his countenance, and, I think, the concurrence of his vote; I am ſure he did not think Mr. Thomas Pitt a dangerous man on account of that declaration, for one of the firſt acts of his Adminiſtration was to pro-

mote Mr. Thomas Pitt to the dignity of a peerage, at a time when peerages were not made by dozens; but when a peerage was the reward of ſome worthy ſervice, or at leaſt beſtowed with delicacy, and was an honour to the man who had it. That was the language of Lord Camelford then. That was alſo my language then, and is my language now. If my opinion is wrong, that is another point, and a fit one for diſcuſſion. What danger is there in my ſaying, of the preſent Miniſters, what I ſaid of former Miniſters? Was it imputed to Lord Camelford, that by reſiſting the ſupplies he voted for delivering up this country to the French, the Spaniards, or the Dutch, who were then our enemies as they are now? Nobody ever imputed any ſuch thing to him. He ſaid by that vote, "I know it will be of ſervice to his Majeſty himſelf, as well as to his ſubjects, to call upon him to diſmiſs his preſent Miniſters." But, in truth, I am guilty of plagiariſm, and ſtill more guilty of repetition, by the aſſertion I have made concerning a radical reform. We are all guilty of it on this ſide of the Houſe, and ſo is the Chancellor of the Exchequer. As to myſelf, I have not only pleaded my guilt twenty different times, in twenty different ſpeeches, but I have actually recorded my guilt. I ſhould have ſuppoſed that what I have repeated ſo often in this Houſe, year after year, and which is to be found on the Journals of this Houſe, cannot be novel now. As long as I ſtated the neceſſity of reforming abuſes in general; while I ſaid there muſt be "a change of meaſures," a "radical change of ſyſtem," there was no alarm taken; but when I came to ſpecify a "Parliamentary Reform," then every thing I ſaid became dangerous and alarming; my words became *then* ambiguous and myſtical.—Why ſhould that which I have ſo often inſiſted upon, be now ſo dangerous in the repetition? I had the honour of moving in this houſe, in the month of May 1796, that which I will now read:

"On a review of ſo many inſtances of groſs and flagrant miſ-
"conduct, proceeding from the ſame pernicious principles, and di-
"rected with incorrigible obſtinacy to the ſame miſchievous ends, we
"deem ourſelves bound, in duty to his Majeſty and to our conſtituents,
"to declare *that we ſee no rational hope of redeeming the affairs of the*
"*kingdom, but by the adoption of a ſyſtem radically and fundamentally*
"*different from that which has produced our preſent calamities.*"

"Radically and fundamentally different;" am I not juſtified by the words of that addreſs, at leaſt excuſed from any danger of novelty, in what I ſaid concerning radical reform? There ſurely muſt be ſome reaſon for all this alarm, for taking this up now as a novel and

alarming doctrine; why, Sir, it is not difficult to find the cauſe of all this pretended apprehenſion of danger from my expreſſion. The Chancellor of the Exchequer finds his popularity is gone, that it is ſucceeded by public odium. He remembers what ſucceſs he had at the time of paſſing the treaſon and ſedition bills; in calling the public attention to my expreſſions inſtead of his own bills, he perverted my meaning, affixed to my words a dangerous tendency, and directed the public mind from the ſubject, which he knew would not bear cloſe inſpection. I am not ſo deſtitute of plain common ſenſe, as not to be able to ſee the drift of his little artifice. The Miniſter is in a dilemma, his popularity is gone, public odium is coming on, his bill is deteſted; he now endeavours to excite an alarm from my expreſſions, weakly and vainly imagining that by blackening me he can render himſelf tolerable. I ſpoke theſe words plainly, "that the Conſtitution ſhould be reſtored to its juſt balance, and the power of the people that which they enjoyed in a former part of his Majeſty's reign."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer affected to ſhew ſome abſurdity in theſe words: what, ſaid he, "is all this to be done merely to keep things as they are?" To which I anſwered, 'no; it is not to keep things as they are, but to reſtore them to what they were." I hope the honourable and learned gentleman is now ſatisfied that I have explained myſelf ſufficiently, and that he will no longer ſtate my words as ambiguous, for that they muſt now appear to him, as well as every body elſe, plain and intelligible. I ſee ſome ſtreſs is laid on the word *radical*; ſome may poſſibly ſuppoſe that I mean a reform ſimilar to that which many have thought to be the beſt, that of *univerſal ſuffrage*. Now, having ſupported the ſcheme of my honourable friend (Mr. Grey) in this Houſe, and having voted for it, I have by that conduct ſhewn I do not approve of the plan of univerſal ſuffrage, and have ſhewn the plan of which I do approve. The learned gentleman was pleaſed to play upon the words, "radical and fundamental," and ſay that they meant to ſtrike at the root—to alter the foundation of our Conſtitution—No, to ſtrike at the root, to alter the foundation of abuſes. To deſtroy the monarchy—No, to ſupport it, by changing the ſyſtem that has brought this country to the brink of ruin. There are ſome gentlemen oppoſite to me, who have not forgotten the whole of their former politics, and to whom this doctrine is not new. It is not free-maſonry, it may be divulged any where and to any perſon; it is to do what Mr. Burke, the Duke of Portland, Earl Spencer, and the right honourable gentleman oppoſite to me, have declared eſſential to the intereſts of their country; they all declared they thought tha

theſe abuſes produced the American war; and Mr. Burke publiſhed his ſentiments upon that ſubject, in a work called "Thoughts on the preſent Diſcontents." The whole of our politics at that time were directed, as mine are ſtill, againſt the root of theſe evils, and which it is the ambition of my life, and was once the ambition of the lives of others, to oppoſe. There are many gentlemen on the other ſide, who cannot think that the events of the year 1784, weaken theſe obſervations; they muſt know they ſtrengthen them, but they think that the revolution in France has made it neceſſary to overlook the whole of this ſyſtem of abuſes. They fear what the Latins call *probabilis*; but they muſt know that there is ſuch a ſyſtem; and they muſt know, that although they abandon their oppoſition to it, I ſhall perſevere. Now, what have I done which all the Whigs of England have not conſtantly and uniformly declared to be abſolutely neceſſary for the ſafety of the ſtate? The only addition I have made, is that of calling for a reform in Parliament; and although it is my opinion now, that it is impoſſible to correct abuſes without parliamentary reform, I confeſs I once thought otherwiſe, and that ſome abuſes might be corrected without it.—I may be aſked, "why do you, who did not always think it abſolutely neceſſary that there ſhould be a parliamentary reform in order to correct abuſes, now hold forth it is abſolutely impoſſible to correct abuſes without parliamentary reform?" To which I anſwer, "I have no difficulty in ſaying, that formerly I thought it only uſeful—that it was likely to do much good, and it was impoſſible it could produce any evil; I never thought the propriety of it doubtful; but there was a time when I did not think it a matter of abſolute neceſſity, that this country, though not ſo well, yet might ſtand without it—this was my opinion." The right honourable gentleman oppoſite to me was of another opinion, for he ſaid in ſubſtance, (I do not pretend to quote words accurately) that "without a parliamentary reform, no good adminiſtration could render any ſervice to the country, and without parliamentary reform the country could not be ſaved againſt a bad adminiſtration." I heard that part of his ſpeech with pleaſure, although I did not go the full length of it in point of opinion. It was in part a compliment to myſelf; it conveyed an idea, that the then adminiſtration was, in his opinion, a good one, and I had the honour to hold a ſhare in it; ſuch was the opinion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer at that time. He ſaid that without a parliamentary reform there could be no ſecurity for the future, (mark the words,) no ſecurity for the future. He looked forward, like our anceſtors, and called for ſecurity againſt probable evils—He ſaid that parliamentary reform was the only ſecurity

againſt a repetition of ſuch calamities as were brought upon us by the American war. I am convinced by experience, this Houſe, and this country muſt be convinced by experience; the right honourable gentleman's adminiſtration has convinced us all, that he was then right in his aſſertion, for we now feel a much greater evil than the American war. But it may be ſaid, that this war is very different from any other war, and therefore it is not juſt to compare it to any other calamity. No two human events are exactly alike, but in their principle they are exactly the ſame, and they have produced ſimilar effects. The American war was commenced to cruſh the principles of riſing liberty; the calamities of that war, I am ſorry to ſay, more than the principle of it, rendered it unpopular; it brought Ireland into a ſtate of diſcontent, which could not be ſet at reſt, without either vigorous meaſures, or conciliation on the part of Government. What is the origin of this war? An attempt to ſtifle the genius of pretended liberty; to check, if you pleaſe, the progreſs of falſe and preſumptuous philoſophy. A war which was by artifice made popular for a while in this country, and moſt unfortunately for us all, popular in this Houſe. Here again the calamity and not the principle of the meaſure, rendered it unpopular. The people became generally diſcontented. They wiſhed for peace. Miniſters oppoſed their deſires. They, very generally, and under great diſcouragements, petitioned the Throne to change theſe Miniſters—They were not attended to. This has brought on your preſent moſt dreadful criſis. In the American war Ireland was appeaſed by conciliation. Ireland has now been goaded to diſtraction. Earl Fitzwilliam, with the moſt virtuous intentions, made to the Iriſh people promiſes which he thought he was empowered to fulfil. Theſe promiſes have been broken by Miniſters; the Iriſh people have been ſcourged by the iron hand of oppreſſion, and ſubjected to the horrors of military execution, and are now in a ſituation too dreadful for the mind to contemplate without diſmay or the heart to feel without horror. That country, inſtead of being part of the ſtrength, is part of the weakneſs of our empire, as well as its calamity. I cannot help thinking, therefore, that from theſe features of our ſituation the right honourable gentleman's predictions are completely verified: "That without reform of Parliament there is no ſecurity to this country from being ruined by a bad Adminiſtration."

An honourable gentleman who ſpoke early in this debate thought fit to make an attack on what he called the *ſeceſſion*. "This took place," ſays he, "in times of great difficulty and danger." There certainly is great difficulty and danger; but the queſtion is,

whether my attendance in this Houſe can remove that difficulty, or provide againſt that danger? But as there are many gentlemen in this Houſe who are not partial to my authority in any thing, I will refer them to the authority of others. In the year 1777 the oppoſition, conſiſting of the Marquis of Rockingham—(whoſe name I can never mention but with emotions of eſteem and affection; whoſe worth, like that of moſt extraordinary men, was not ſo well valued in his life time as it has ſince his death, have demonſtrated the value of ſuch a man to his country)—Lord John Cavendiſh, Sir George Saville, and Mr. Burke—I do not mention myſelf among them---all thought that, (in the middle of the American war, and when great loans were to be raiſed, and when the country was in great difficulty) they could not do better than to ceaſe attending Parliament, when neither their virtues nor their talents could be uſeful; and after both had been exerted in vain. I ceaſed to think with them on the propriety of ſtaying away, and therefore came down to this Houſe before them; but I never blamed them for their conduct: nor is their conduct blamed now. So it ſeems that what was right and honourable in theſe perſons is factious in me. In my inſtance I am particularly unfortunate. I can pleaſe my adverſaries in no way. They ſay there is miſchief in my ſtaying away, and they accuſe me of producing miſchief by my ſpeeches. They are neither pleaſed with my preſence nor my abſence. "What are his motives for ſtaying away?" Upon my word, Sir, I will not flatter the honourable gentleman who ſpoke laſt by telling him that he is the cauſe either of my preſence or my abſence. But if I was obliged to attend much to him when I am preſent, he would be the cauſe of either my abſence or my preſence---perhaps he can gueſs which. I cannot ſtate any thing in this Houſe in favour of a parliamentary reform without his telling me I afford encouragement to the French. Why then, Sir, if I paid that reſpect to his authority, which I dare ſay he thinks it deſerves, I ſhould ſtay away. "No, I muſt attend;" but then I muſt either be ſilent or ſpeak as he pleaſes. I ſhall follow my own judgment while that is not diſagreeable to my conſtituents, and I will not ſo far flatter the honourable gentleman as to ſay that I ſhould either ſerve or pleaſe my conſtituents by following his directions. I apply this obſervation to ſeveral other Members of this Houſe, and among the reſt to the honourable member for Lincoln. Is there not ſomething of ſelf at the bottom of all this ſeeming anxiety for my conduct? I know not whether it is from my depriving them of their opportunities, their glorious, and to ſome of them, golden opportunities, of gratifying their vanity or their

avarice. When I conſider theſe matters I do not ſee any great reaſon for wondering that ſo many gentlemen ſhould be angry with me for my abſence; but to be plain with them, I am not very anxious about pleaſing them. The gentleman who ſpoke laſt ſays, "that the people of this country in general are diſſatisfied with my abſence." I ſhould wiſh to have a better authority than his before I arrive at that concluſion. The people I repreſent, who are, without diſparagement, fully as good judges of that as the honourable gentleman, have told me otherwiſe, and I think I can rely on their veracity alſo as well as upon his. Another honourable gentleman tells us "that we are neglecting our duty while others are performing theirs." By duty, I preſume, he means "attending and dividing with the Miniſter." I made no general allegation that the Members do not attend; the meaning of what I ſaid was, that when they are here they do not always perform their duty. The learned gentleman, whoſe ſpeech imputed to us party violence, ſaid, "that the public look at us, and will judge of our conduct." I hope they do; and without vanity, I wiſh they may.

There is nothing that I have a greater deſire for than that the people of this country ſhould look at, and carefully examine, our conduct, and the conduct of the Houſe of Commons. I wiſh them to judge, and to judge candidly, whether this is ſuch a Houſe of Commons, as, that in it, thoſe who think like me, can procure any advantage to the public by their attendance. "But you ſtill keep your ſeat in Parliament," ſay they; why yes, I do, Sir, and I have no intention of applying to the right honourable gentleman oppoſite to me for the Chiltern hundreds in order to vacate that ſeat—Why? Becauſe I do not think that ſuch a ſtep would be of any ſervice to the people of this country. Am I to deſpair that even *this* Houſe of Commons may change its ſentiments? Is that change impoſſible?—I hope not. I believe not. Then why ſhould I reſign a ſituation, which, although now uſeleſs, may hereafter be uſeful to my country? "But you ſtay away becauſe you know you cannot obtain a Parliamentary Reform; you ſay that Reform is abſolutely neceſſary, and therefore you do not mean to try for a Parliamentary Reform in this Houſe?" To which I anſwer, I know no other legal way, becauſe I know no other peaceable way of obtaining a Reform, and therefore I ſhall never try any other way. I confeſs I am not very ſanguine in my expectations of the Houſe of Commons; but I think it may, from circumſtances, commence meaſures which may lead to an entire and radical reform.—"But you do not expect to be able to perſuade the Houſe of Commons to commence this work;"—why no, not by my ſpeeches certainly;

and yet I think they may be perſuaded—How? By the public. I hope ſuch an opinion will be ſo expreſſed as to induce this Houſe to ſee the wiſdom and neceſſity of the meaſure; and I am afraid it will never appear to this Houſe to be wiſe, before it appears to be abſolutely neceſſary. I have done my duty in impreſſing this opinion upon the Houſe. But why ſhould I, by my attendance from day to day in this Houſe, give countenance to the idea that there is, in this Houſe, a free unbiaſſed opinion, and that it is not under the influence of the Crown?—I am not of high authority, but that authority, ſuch as it is, I ſhould be ſorry to pledge to the doctrine that the branches of the Legiſlature are not under the controul of the Executive Power. I believe that thoſe, if there are any, who think that the legiſlative power is not under the control and management of the Crown, know but little of the real condition of this, or the other Houſe of Parliament. I ſay ſo, becauſe I think ſo; then why ſhould I not abſent myſelf from ſuch a Parliament, as I think proper. But they ſay, "my conſtituents ſent me here; that I am not to follow my own inclination, but ſhould attend for their intereſts." I beg to appeal to my conſtituents, and to none but them, for with their deſires I am ready to comply; my attendance this night in this Houſe is an inſtance of that compliance; but how ſtands this language with regard to conſtituents? There are many counties large and populous, the electors of which may call upon their repreſentatives to obey them, and they may do ſo; but with regard to this Houſe at large, I ſhould be glad to know how many Members there are whoſe conſtituents have no influence whatever over them, becauſe, between them there is not ſo much as the appearance of connection; and even where the caſe is otherwiſe, where the connection is ſuppoſed to be intimate, how many Members are there in this Houſe who have diſobeyed the expreſs directions of their conſtituents? "But you are ſpeaking on one ſide only; it is true the King has the prerogative of declaring war and proclaiming peace, which may create ſome influence; but if a war be improperly declared, or peace improperly delayed, this Houſe has the power of withholding the ſupplies." O! mighty well; I know it: but if the Miniſter can influence the majority and obtain their votes, what then becomes of your famous check upon the Executive Power? By the theory of your Conſtitution you are free; by its practice you have no freedom to oppoſe the Crown in any thing of this nature, and your Conſtitution is now ſhaken to the very foundation!

Nothing in which my name is included is to paſs unnoticed in this debate, and therefore the right honourable Secretary of State

referred to a letter of a very curious kind, written by a noble Lord, for whom I have great perſonal reſpect, but I beg leave to ſay, that I had no concern in, or knowledge of, what paſſed on the occaſion to which it refers more than the right honourable Secretary; nor had I any knowledge of, or concern in, the publication of that letter. I know that an application was made to the noble Lord by ſome Members of this Houſe, requeſting him to call for a change of Adminiſteration. I know not who they were: I never was let into that ſecret; I never wiſhed to know who the parties were; but the publication of that curious letter has made known a fact of a very important nature to this country, viz. "That there are in this Houſe a great number of Members who conſtantly go on with the Miniſter, and give him their ſupport, although they diſapprove of his meaſures, and think him and his colleagues utterly unfit for their ſituations;" and who think therefore that there ought to be a change. But it is ſaid, "that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer were to go out of power, I ſhould expect to come into his ſituation, and that therefore what I may ſay upon the ſubject is not worth attending to." It is rather hard that I am to be thus ſilenced. Suppoſe I was completely diſintereſted—I know that to a man of the particular taſte of the Secretary of State, it is difficult to conceive a diſintereſted ſentiment. But, let him for a moment ſuppoſe me to be diſintereſted. How could I have acted otherwiſe than I did? Perhaps he thinks that, to be candid, I ſhould have ſaid—"My Lord, take care; I am going to ſupport you only for a while: you will not continue above a ſeſſion or two; for then I will come into your place: you run into a danger." In reality I gave the noble Lord no advice upon the matter; if I had, it ſhould have been a diſintereſted piece of advice; if I had told him all I thought, I ſhould have ſaid—"Take care, my Lord; take care, that, while you are forming the Miniſtry, you are not doing ſo without ſolid grounds: unleſs you have a proper pledge of a Reform, the good which you intend will come to nothing. Take care that you are not venturing into a country where a man of your frankneſs is not a match for the inſidious arts which will be practiſed againſt you. Take care you do not go into difficulties which will deſtroy you; that you are not invited only for the purpoſe of putting an end to the preſent war, in order that the ſyſtem which you ſtifle for a while may be re-eſtabliſhed." And, if I had been called upon to name this ſucceſſor of the noble Lord, I ſhould have no difficulty in pointing out the preſent Chancellor of the Exchequer as the man. I had no concern whatever in the matter. I ſhould wiſh certainly for a change of Adminiſtration that might be able to procure peace.

My ſincere wiſh was, never to make any part of any Adminiſtration, and I never will, unleſs I have a pledge for a general Reform of abuſes, which muſt be preceded by a complete dereliction of thoſe aſſumptions of power that have been made ſince the right honourable gentleman came into office; in ſhort, until we have a pledge that the Conſtitution ſhall be reſtored, at leaſt to the condition it was in when the Chancellor of the Exchequer came into power; and that there ſhall be an entire reform of abuſes. Until that ſhall be the deſire of the people at large, and the opinion of this Houſe, I will never form a part of any Adminiſtration. But I think it is too much to ſay to me, "Why ſhould you ſtate your terms before your Sovereign has called for your ſervices?" I never ſtated my terms; I never offered my ſervices; and I have no deſire of an offer. But I have long ſaid, what I now ſay, that I will never accept of any employment but on the conditions that I have ſtated. But here again let me be properly underſtood, for although I wiſh for a Reform of Parliament, I have no idea of obtaining it, but by the organ and through the means of Parliament. The attempt to obtain it in any other way, I never thought of. That I deteſt the preſent Adminiſtration, that is to ſay, the preſent ſyſtem, is moſt true; but if I deteſt them on account of one thing more than another, it is, that their meaſures have made me think it poſſible that changes may be made by illegal means, that is, without the intervention of Parliament.

At one time I know that this was impoſſible; what a dreadful reflection to a feeling conſtitutional mind, to think of the change of ſentiment that has been effected! Some gentlemen ſay, "that with me every debate degenerates into party ſpirit; that I am ambitious, and that all my ſpeeches tend to throwing things into confuſion." Do they mean to ſay that I wiſh for violence and tumult?—Do they think that I am deſirous of imitating Buonaparte, of carrying every thing before me by military valour; or, like Barras, to leave troops ſitting in or ſurrounding this Houſe, and ſuppreſſing the men or party whom I dread by military violence?—Do they think that any of us have ſuch wiſhes?—Do they think that the inconveniencies of my life (happily now leſs than formerly) are ſuch as to make me wiſh for confuſion? That I aim at my time of life to ſeek a better fortune by the uſe of arms? I do not think that thoſe who know me will make any of theſe accuſations againſt me. Aye! Aye! but then comes the order of the day, "diſappointment and envy;" what may not theſe paſſions goad me to? A learned Civilian, of whom I ſhall ſay the leſs, becauſe I had formerly the means of knowing him intimately, chuſes to come forward and carricature me as an envious

and diſappointed man. The candour and generoſity of this attempt, coming from him, I ſhall leave to the world. The talents of thoſe artiſts for carricature I will not queſtion; but looking to themſelves, and looking to me, they will perhaps find it difficult to exhibit my figure as the emblem of envy. Not that I defy their genius for miſrepreſentation; but I really think they might find among themſelves figures better adapted to the character. He diſcovers in me a reſemblance to Hanno, the Carthaginian. The alluſion naturally brings us back to the hiſtory of the period, and makes us think of Hannibal as well as Hanno. If I am Hanno, he muſt have had in his eye alſo the Hannibal of the preſent times. The learned Doctor did not ſay who the Hannibal was, although it was not difficult to find where he meant the alluſion to ſtrike. And certainly there were ſome points of reſemblance between the right honourable gentleman and the character of Hannibal which a Plutarch would deſcribe with energetic truth. We are told in hiſtory, if I remember rightly, that Hannibal was the ſon of Hamilcar, one of the greateſt generals and ſtateſmen in the world, and Hannibal was ſworn, at nine years of age, by his father, to be the eternal enemy of Rome. Whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer was ſworn at that age to be the eternal enemy of the French, I know not. There are ſome other circumſtances which we read in hiſtory concerning theſe two characters not unworthy of recollection at this moment. Not only was Hanno an enemy to Hannibal, but alſo to the whole Barſine faction, who were ſuppoſed to have ſhared a great deal from the ſucceſſes of Hannibal in war. It was ſaid of him that in all his zeal for the public good he took particular care of his own family, and that Aſdrubal and all his other relatives in Spain and elſewhere, were enriched with the public ſpoil. The right honourable gentleman may perhaps have ſome relations who certainly have not had their fortunes ruined by the war. I rather think there are ſome other points of reſemblance between Hannibal and the right honourable gentleman, Hannibal having conducted the war againſt the Romans with great rage, and every degree of bitterneſs and cruelty; and after having ſworn, as I have ſaid, eternal enmity, thought himſelf a fit perſon to negotiate a peace; and indeed from the ſpeech which Livy makes him deliver, Hannibal was as eloquent a man as any that ever made a ſpeech. The figure that he made in the Senate of Carthage upon that occaſion was extraordinary. After all the declarations he had made, he felt the ſingularity of his ſituation, and he ſhortly expoſed it—"*Ego, Hannibal, peto pacem.*" The Chancellor of the Exchequer has alſo conducted a war with as much bitterneſs and rage as that of Hannibal againſt the Romans.

He alſo has ſaid it would be diſgraceful and ruinous to propoſe peace, but he alſo has thought himſelf a fit perſon to propoſe and negotiate a peace; and, like Hannibal, he is a very eloquent man. But when we come to the other features of the character of Hannibal, I am afraid the reſemblance between him and the Chancellor of the Exchequer will fail. Hannibal was the moſt ſkilful and the moſt ſucceſsful conductor of a war the world ever ſaw. Is that the character of the Chancellor of the Exchequer? Hannibal had a conſtantly diffident Senate, that counteracted his meaſures, thwarted his ſchemes, denied him what he aſked, and conſtantly allowed him but ſcanty ſupplies; and yet with all theſe difficulties and impediments, he performed greater deeds in war than any other General, except Alexander. Is that the caſe with the Chancellor of the Exchequer?—With a diffident Senate, with ſcanty ſupplies, Hannibal contrived to keep up in Italy, for fifteen years together, a powerful confederacy againſt the Romans, although they were made up of States jealous of each other, the intereſt of ſome of whom it was to attack Carthage; yet he kept them together in a confederacy againſt Rome for fifteen years. Is that the caſe of the Chancellor of the Exchequer? If, therefore, I am an envious man, let me be envious of the emoluments of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; do not ſay I am envious of his glory, becauſe that would be a bad compliment to the character of my underſtanding.

It has been ſaid by the Secretary of State, that we, unintentionally, pronounced a panegyric on the Chancellor of the Exchequer for his financial ſkill, by ſtating the year 1792 as a period of our proſperity; becauſe it muſt be well remembered that our condition in 1784 was very low in point of finance. I admit the great proſperity of this country in the year 1792, as compared with that of 1784. I go farther, I applaud now, as I have often applauded, the Chancellor of the Exchequer's ſyſtem with regard to the ſinking fund. But I cannot think it a very wonderful thing that this country ſhould flouriſh in its finance in the courſe of eight years peace. I ſhould certainly think otherwiſe, if I agreed with the Secretary of State, who ſays, that the preſent lowneſs of our funds is owing to the increaſe of our commerce. But why was I an approver of the conduct of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1792 in preference to that of 1784? Why! let him aſk his right honourable friend (Mr. Windham) who ſits near him. The ſyſtem that was adopted in 1784 was entirely repugnant to the principles of our Conſtitution. Whether the calamities that have ſince befallen this country are the effect of the ſyſtem adopted in 1784, ſome perſons may think an important inquiry. I think otherwiſe; for by that

ſyſtem the power of the Crown was prodigiouſly increaſed, and much of that power, which till then had been in the hands of the people, was made to depend upon the caprice of that tribe of perſons who are conſtantly about a Court, have none but Court views, and may very properly be denominated a Court Faction. I now complain not of the guilt of this, but of the calamity. Has that ſyſtem, or has it not, produced that calamity? "But here we come to a diſtinction: in conſidering this war, we muſt conſider ſeparately what we ourſelves have done, and what our allies have done. Our allies have deſerted us; we had no reaſon to ſuppoſe they would." Are we to conſider the character of a Stateſman as not including in it ſome faculty of gueſſing at the views and intereſts, and conſequently the probable conduct, of thoſe with whom he is to enter into alliance? The Chancellor of the Exchequer may ſay, "I engaged with the King of Pruſſia; I thought he would have been faithful, but he was faithleſs." Was he not warned of this? When he interfered in the affairs of Holland, he was deſired to look at the ſtate of Flanders; he deſpiſed our counſel: the reſult is before our eyes. "But this was a mere miſtake." Yes: it was certainly a miſtake; but it was a miſtake of which he was forewarned. How ſtands the caſe now with regard to Auſtria? I heard laſt night for the firſt time, in this Houſe (and I was almoſt confounded when I heard it; I had almoſt thought I had got into ſome other Houſe), Auſtria was called our "perfidious Ally" by one of the friends of the Chancellor of the Exchequer! This naturally brings to my recollection the manner in which the Miniſter has often ſpoken of the Houſe of Auſtria. To take the debate on the Auſtrian loan, for inſtance, as a ſample of the reſt: I conſidered the Auſtrian loan like a ſubſidy to Auſtria. I took the liberty of ſaying that we ſhould never have our money back: the Chancellor of the Exchequer fell into a rage at this: "What," ſaid he, "treat a *Loan* like a *Subſidy*?—a loan to a Prince who is as punctual to pecuniary payments as renowned for military glory!—Our faithful ally!—It was baſe to deſert him!" How ſtands the fact? No re-payments was ever made upon this loan to his Imperial Majeſty; and in a few weeks the people of this country muſt pay out of their own pockets the intereſt of this money, which was advanced to the Emperor, becauſe the Chancellor of the Exchequer was pleaſed to have a good opinion of the credit of the Bank of Vienna. "But human nature is liable to miſtake." So it is: but are thoſe who miſtake almoſt every thing, fit perſons to poſſeſs public confidence? "But do not look at the campaign with Auſtria; behold the brilliancy of our naval victories! Has our navy not acted as it ſhould do?" Certainly it has; and but for its ex-

ertions we ſhould not now be debating in this Houſe. But, as an honourable friend of mine has obſerved already, what are we to think of that cauſe which even ſuch exertions cannot ſerve? Monteſquieu, who had a happy method of expreſſing his opinion, ſaid, that "He conceived God Almighty created the Turks and the Spaniards for no other purpoſe than to ſhew to mankind what a great empire is, when inhabited by ſlaves." What would Monteſquieu ſay, if he lived among us? He would ſay, "That country muſt be in a deplorable ſtate, when it is governed by a Miniſter who cannot advance his cauſe one ſtep by the brilliant actions of a Howe, a Duncan, a St. Vincent! The man who cannot accompliſh his object by ſuch exploits muſt have ſomething in view that is not attainable by any human power."

The Secretary of State has ſaid ſomething of an huſſaring expedition in America; by way of deriſion, I preſume. Have we had much profitable huſſaring in this war? I know the Engliſh have often acted with glory; and I hope they will continue to do ſo: but, in compliment to the army that I reſpect, I had rather be ſilent than ſay any thing of the Engliſh campaigns in Flanders. But it was ſtated that we participated in the glory of our allies when they were ſucceſsful on the Continent; that to our ſupplies of counſel and of gold, were chiefly to be aſcribed the triumphs they had achieved. On this participation in the ſucceſs of our allies the right honourable gentleman boaſted in a memorable quotation:

Quod Thebæ cecidère, meum eſt: me credite Leſbon,
Me Teuedon, Chryſenque, et Cyllan Apollinis urbes,
Et Syron cepiſſe: mea concuſſa putate
Procubuiſſe ſolo Lyrneſſia mœnia dextra.

"The people of England had a merit in this (he ſaid) from the loan they gave; there was not a peaſant in this country who did not participate in the joy for the victories of the Auſtrian arms, becauſe there was not a peaſant in this country whoſe labours did not contribute to produce the loan by which the Auſtrian arms were ſupplied". Something of this kind was ſaid of the Pruſſian arms at one time—that ſcene is now ſhifted—now, even Auſtria is called a perfidious ally. What concluſion do I draw from this? Why, that a man who is compelled to change and to ſhift from point to point, as the Miniſter has done in the courſe of this war, either has no definite object in view, or that, if he has, he never will arrive at it. How are the meaſures of the Miniſter defended? Can you ſay any thing for the Miniſter? "No; but others would be worſe." Why, truly that appears a little extravagant, I think. "But would you not defend this meaſure rather than invite Buona-

parte to come here? Which do you think the worſe of the two, this bill, or the requiſition of Buonaparte?" Why, truly, I muſt confeſs this is an ingenious way of arguing; a curious queſtion to aſk of an Engliſhman; of the two, certainly a requiſition from our own Governors is better than that of a foreign enemy: but what ſort of defence do you call that? What is this bill? A requiſition; founded upon what—juſtice or injuſtice? Upon injuſtice. What is a requiſition founded upon injuſtice? A robbery. There is no criterion by which this plunder upon the people is to be made. Some have called it a tax upon expenditure, and ſome a tax upon income; it is neither the one nor the other. Indeed I have never heard any one of its advocates explain ſatisfactorily what it is. Quite ſure I am, that it is very difficult, if not impoſſible, to lay a tax upon income, without great injuſtice; and in this caſe, that injuſtice is of the moſt horrible kind. The caſe put by an honourable friend of mine, is a very fit one, to ſhew the inequality of the meaſure. Suppoſe one perſon has 1000l. in the Short Annuities, another 1000l. in the Long Annuities; the income will be the ſame to both, but the property is very unequal, conſequently the ability to pay is much greater in the one than in the other, ſo much as ſix to one, or thereabouts; and yet if this is to be regulated by income, the charge will be exactly the ſame on both. Income is a thing which cannot in its nature be aſcertained; and conſequently this meaſure muſt be defective in that particular, as well as in every other view in which it can be conſidered. Gentlemen have ſaid, that "we ought to give up a part of our property to preſerve the remainder." The juſtneſs of that propoſition I never attempted to deny, when taken in its fair ſenſe; that is to ſay, that, by giving a part, the remainder is ſecured; but when a part is given to a meaſure that has in its very eſſence a tendency to render the remainder inſecure, there is an end of the juſtneſs of the propoſition. Such is the nature of the meaſure now before the Houſe; by aſſenting to this bill you will lay down a principle that the Miniſter may ſeize what part and what proportion he pleaſes of the property of the people of this country, upon the ſame pretext as he is pleaſed to make uſe of now, namely, that it is done for the public good.

I never, until laſt night, heard any thing like a ſpecific propoſition for taxing property in the funds—I have no doubt of the purity of the motives of the learned gentleman (Mr. Simeon) who made that propoſition; but I cannot help expreſſing a hope that no direct tax of that kind will ever take place in this country. There is one way in which the funds may be made to feel the effects of taxation, and that is a fair way, for it is indirect in its effect.

Such, indeed, is always the caſe, when any addition is made to our funded debt; that addition muſt, in the nature of things, have ſome effect upon the value of that which was funded before. This effect, however, touches nothing but the marketable price of the capital; it has nothing to do with the dividends. That ſort of effect it is juſt it ſhould have; becauſe Government faith is only pledged for the punctual payment of the intereſt of your funded debt; the capital, each individual muſt make what he can of in the market.

This bill is an unjuſt meaſure from the beginning to the end, but that which is the moſt glaring injuſtice is the clauſe which gives to the bill a retroſpective effect. That makes it, what no bill ever ſhould be, viz. an *ex poſt facto* law. By this you tax a man next year, becauſe he kept a carriage laſt year. From the circumſtance of a man having kept a carriage laſt year, you preſume he will have a certain income the next, and therefore you tax him at a certain rate; nothing can be more inconcluſive, or more unjuſt than this. Some gentlemen, indeed, admit that this bill is unjuſt, which they affect to lament, but they ſay that money muſt be had, and a great deal muſt be raiſed within the year, and therefore they will vote for this bill for want of knowing how to find out a better meaſure for the public ſervice: the Member for Lincoln has ſaid, that although there is a great inequality in this bill, and conſequently much injuſtice, yet he muſt vote for it, ſince he knew of no better plan. When a meaſure is propoſed to be agreed upon by this Houſe, to take from the people that which muſt in many caſes be taken unjuſtly, if taken at all, what ſhould that be called but a robbery? for it certainly is ſo. This bill is unjuſt in many caſes; it is acknowledged to be ſo. Are your public affairs in that ſtate in which it is indiſpenſably neceſſary that your Legiſlature ſhould enact unjuſtice?—Why, Sir, this bill is ſo monſtrous, and the objections to it are ſo many, that the difficulty is, where to begin with them, or how to compreſs them into ſomething like a tolerable compaſs. I met a gentleman to-day, whoſe caſe is only one out of a thouſand others that are at hand, perhaps ſome of them harder, or will be ſo under this bill. That gentleman has, for ſome time, kept a four-wheeled little carriage, drawn by a ſingle horſe. He aſked me at what time it was neceſſary for him to prove he diſcontinued the uſe of it, in order to be exempted from the duties of this bill upon that ſingle article? I told him I underſtood the day to be the 10th of October laſt. He ſaid he had laid it down before that time, and wiſhed to have ſold it, but could not meet with a purchaſer. I believe there are many Members in this Houſe to whom that is no wonder. The

gentleman then told me, that one day, after the 10th of October, having occaſion to go as far as Fulham, and it being a rainy day, he took his little carriage, there being a head, or cover to it, and went in it, in preference to riding on horſeback, and to ſave the expence of a hackney coach. Thus by this one journey to Fulham in a rainy day, he has uſed this famous four-wheeled carriage, and muſt therefore pay for that ride 32l. a year for an indefinite period. I ſay an indefinite period, for there is no time for the operation of this bill, it muſt be continued until a certain ſum of money be raiſed by it. Now I aſk, is this any thing like juſtice? I wiſh to know, whether there was any thing adopted in France, that in point of principle, is worſe than this? The extent of the injuſtice is another thing; the principle is the ſame whether the injury be large or ſmall; by the way, this injury is not very contemptible in ſize. The next point that preſents itſelf to my mind, thus curſorily running over the bill, (for I do not profeſs to be minute, that would be endleſs); the next point, I ſay, is the caſe of a perſon who is entitled to a ſmall fortune upon the death of his parent. It is a caſe of a moſt abominable oppreſſion; a hardſhip never heard of in this country until this bill made its appearance. Let us ſuppoſe the caſe of a ſon whoſe father had lived in a profuſe way the year before his death, and whoſe expenditure was much beyond the proportion of his income. The ſon muſt pay for it; for the ſcale of aſſeſſment is not to be formed by what the eſtate of the ſon can afford, but by what the extravagance of the father has ſquandered. Thus a man is made to pay, not according to his ability, but according to his misfortune; not that misfortune which is brought on by his own fault either, but that misfortune which is brought upon him by the fault of another. Does this apply to the rich heir? No, he is protected by the proviſions of the bill; but it is thus the poor one is expoſed to the moſt inhuman cruelty. But in anſwer to this it is ſaid that the relief afforded under the *declaration of property*, is an anſwer to all theſe objections. Are you aware of all the difficulties that will attend the declaration of income? I own that, ſpeaking in the abſtract, I do not ſee why gentlemen of fortune ſhould have any difficulty in declaring what their incomes are; but I know they have that difficulty; they do poſſeſs that nicety. I know that many gentlemen in the country, who in the early part of their lives, in conſequence of ſome diſſipations had improvidently granted annuities, which they would profit highly by paying off, even although they mortgaged their eſtates for that purpoſe, but who nevertheleſs continue to pay ſuch annuities rather than mortgage their eſtates, becauſe that has a tendency to diſcloſe their real income. I am not

defending that practice; I am not saying it is a wise one. I rather think it is a weakness, or perhaps a fillines; but I am stating it as a fact, to shew the disinclination men have to disclose their circumstances; and is it not cruel to attack their delicacy, or if gentlemen like it better, their prejudices, in the way proposed by this bill, and then to call such a measure relief? Again—let us suppose two gentlemen, next door neighbours, each of the income of one thousand a year, the one of them living in his own house, the other giving 200l. a year rent for the one he occupies; suppose the two houses to be equally assessed, these two persons will pay exactly the same sum by this bill, although, in point of fact, the income of the one is a complete thousand a year and the other only eight hundred, for this bill does not allow the rent to be deducted out of the income. Do you call that justice? I will put another case; it is my own, and in my favour by this bill, but unjustly in my favour. I rented a house in London for a while; I afterwards bought it. I borrowed the money to pay for it; for which money I now pay the yearly interest of 100l. that 100l. a year which I pay as interest for borrowed money, may be deducted out of my income under the provision of this bill, whereas had I continued to pay the same sum in rent, and not purchased the house, I should not have been entitled to make the deduction. Do you see any justice in that case? The truth of the matter is, that this bill is filled with most monstrous inequalities, and the most gross injustice in every branch of it; and it reminds me of what is stated by Doctor Adam Smith, in his celebrated book on the Wealth of Nations. That author complains of the inequality with which small taxes fall on different classes of the community. What would he say if he were living, and should look at the inequalities of this bill? But the truth of the matter is, that the authors of this measure have already shewn a contempt for the liberty of the subject, and they very consistently follow up their plan with a contempt for their property. But it seems "the State requires great supplies;" I grant it. But let me ask if the necessity is such as to require great injustice? By this bill there will be cases in which one man will pay triple the sum which another pays, and yet both their incomes will be the same. In defending this bill you are forced to go to France for argument. You say, "I want money; money I must have, I care not how."—This bill will fall with great weight upon the poor; and will fall unequally even upon them. It will fall with tremendous weight upon the middle class, but it will fall unequally upon the middle class, some of which it must inevitably crush. It will fall with considerable weight upon the rich; so that there is not one

claſs in the whole ſociety upon which this bill will fall with juſtice It has but one ſpecies of equality, and upon that perhaps you may defend it, the equality of its injuſtice, for to all it is certainly unjuſt.

Some gentlemen in this Houſe have affected a great deal of contempt for the opinion of ſhopkeepers, as to the effect which this bill will have upon gentlemen. "What can a ſhopkeeper know of a gentleman?"—Why yes, he can, and muſt know a good deal of many gentlemen, before he can be a ſucceſsful ſhopkeeper. I aſk every gentleman in this Houſe, whether at a particular ſeaſon of the year he does not allot a certain part of his income for the payment of his tradeſmen? when this bill comes to be carried into effect, may not many gentlemen ſay to a tradeſman, and ſay truly, nay, muſt not many ſay, "I have been compelled to give away my money to pay the new aſſeſſment, you muſt wait until I have another opportunity of paying you." Perhaps ſome gentlemen may ſay, as a learned gentleman has decently ſaid, imitating the language of Henry the VIII. upon a well-known occaſion.—"You are brutes, and do not know theſe things." Tradeſmen are no ſuch brutes as not to know that if gentlemen have no money they cannot pay their bills. They know it already; many gentlemen have given them pretty clear information upon that ſubject. But we may be told that if a gentleman does not pay his tradeſman, the law is open; that the law is equal to all:—true, the law is equal to all; but that law cannot be enforced without expence, and is it equally convenient to all to defray the expence, which is a preliminary to the enforcement of that law? But it ſeems "we who oppoſe this bill have ſhifted our ground: at one time we complained that this Bill would affect, in a direct manner, all perſons in trade, but ſince the modifications of the bill, that argument is done away." To which I anſwer, look at the reſolutions of the different meetings that have been held all over this metropolis. They all ſtate that no modification can render this bill free from objection, by which they clearly ſhew that they object to the principle of the bill.

Some gentlemen have had the firmneſs to ſay, "that this bill is now a popular bill." But the Noble Lord (Lord Hawkeſbury) laſt night very fairly excepted the metropolis, by which he meant certainly the whole town and the out-pariſhes. I will, for a moment, be extravagant enough to ſuppoſe, merely for the ſake of the argument, that this bill is not diſliked in any other part of the kingdom; the inhabitants of the metropolis will pay nearly *one fourth* of the whole. Is it not a dreadful thing that they who have to a man proteſted againſt it, many of whom have ſolemnly declared it will

be their ruin, ſhould be commanded to comply with ſuch a meaſure? What is the language of a money bill? "We give voluntarily:" Who gives voluntarily; all the people of the metropolis? No! do they not ſtate it will ruin them? Will this bill keep their affection towards Government? Is it to be ſuppoſed that they will want to be addreſſed by a few words which were delivered laſt night by an honourable Baronet (Sir Francis Burdett), to make them compare this to meaſures which the French have adopted? They are driven to make theſe compariſons by this Houſe: and that is what I believe the honourable Baronet meant by what he ſaid. Every one will not judge freely, but I hope moſt will. Is it not a lamentable thing that this Houſe ſhould paſs a bill againſt which the whole metropolis proteſts, and from which nearly one fourth of the whole impoſt is to be collected? Then comes again the common-place anſwer: "you encourage the enemy by your obſervations." This is the old and ſtale argument conſtantly made uſe of againſt me during the American war. "You are a friend to a French invaſion." Sir, I have ſome experience in theſe falſe accuſations of "encouraging the enemy," and ſo on. It is the faſhion now to ſay to any man who does not join in reverence to the Miniſter, "you are the friend of the French." "There are a number of diſaffected people in this country who wiſh to ſee things thrown into confuſion." Whether the Directory of France believe this or not, I neither know nor care. I know where they have learnt it. They have learnt it from the late books of Mr. Burke, and the ſpeeches of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and thoſe officious, charitable friends of his, who confound in one common maſs of guilty friendſhip for the French, all thoſe who oppoſe the Miniſter. This idea Mr. Burke inculcated ſtrongly in his late pamphlet. He ſtates, "that all reformers in this country are men of French principles." The Chancellor of the Exchequer, and all his aſſiſtants, aid and abet the publication of that ſlander; and if the Directory are fooliſh enough to believe it, all I can ſay is, I know to whom they owe the favour.

Does the Chancellor of the Exchequer think that this tax can be levied? When does he think the operation of it is to ceaſe? There is no ſtated period for its continuance, it is to be in force untill it ſhall have produced ſeven millions in the firſt inſtance, and eight millions in the ſecond, the whole ſum to be raiſed being fifteen millions. Why then the bill, although called a temporary meaſure, is not to be for one, two, or three years, but is to continue untill it ſhall have produced fifteen millions. Upon my honour, Sir, it is quite impoſſible to preſerve patience; here again I am

called upon to pay too much in proportion, as my neighbour ſhall happen to pay too little. If I pay my ſhare for two years, and my neighbour does not pay for one, I muſt pay again, ſo that I pay for three years inſtead of two; that will be the general effect of it. You who can pay, muſt continue to pay. After you have paid for yourſelf, you muſt then pay for your neighbour, if through inability or diſhoneſty he has not paid for himſelf; ſo that you may go on, year after year, for four, five, or ſix, or more years, paying money for others as well as yourſelf.—"But this is the exigency of the time." Why, yes, Sir, it is that ſort of exigency or vengeance which puts to flight all notions of juſtice, of equity, of honour, or of honeſty; and for what? For the ſupport of this war. What is the nature of this war? What is the object of it? I can conceive that Hannibal might have ſaid to the Carthaginians—"Grant me but ſuch and ſuch ſupplies, and I will put an end to this war. I will take the city of Rome, and I will bring you peace." But is any thing of that kind the caſe here? We are told that this is a war not only defenſive in principle, but alſo in operations. Will you expect, therefore, that Lord Hawkeſbury ſhould go to Paris as Hannibal did to Rome? But to be ſerious—Do you expect that your armies, or even your fleet, can bring your affairs to a criſis which may terminate the conteſt? The right honourable Secretary of State ſays, "that if the French ſhould invade us, the ſtruggle would be a very ſhort one." I hope that if that event ſhould happen, the ſtruggle would be a ſhort one; but I hope alſo the enemy will not come. The threat that they will come, however, brings to my mind what was ſaid by the Chancellor of the Exchequer four years ago. I remember how, in a beautiful diſplay of eloquence, he ſaid "the French were not on the brink, but in the gulph of bankruptcy." They now ſay we are in that ſituation. I hope they are as much miſtaken with regard to our reſources as the Chancellor of the Exchequer has proved himſelf to be with regard to theirs.

I ſay, I hope for peace, and I ſay there is no rational hope for peace without a removal of Miniſters. They ſay they have done all they can to obtain peace, and they refer to the opinion which this Houſe expreſſed upon the ſubject of the laſt negotiation. Not having attended when that negotiation was diſcuſſed, I will grant that in their laſt negotiation they were ſincere. But now they triumph and ſay, "whatever you thought of the war at firſt, now you ſhould join in the proſecution of it, for now you have no other remedy." Will the people of this country be ſatisfied with this declaration? Will they not rather ſay, "we ſhould have Miniſters who were

not only ſincerely deſirous *laſt ſummer* to obtain peace, but who were *always* deſirous to obtain it; who are *now* deſirous to obtain it." Will they not ſay, "we know that this conteſt might have been put an end to three years ago? Nothing ſtood in the way of that bleſſing but the perverſe diſpoſition of His Majeſty's preſent Miniſters." Indeed the honourable gentleman, who ſpoke laſt, whatever reaſon may have changed his mind ſince, was of that opinion ſome time ago. He thought we ſhould propoſe ſome terms of peace; he made a motion to that effect, in which I had the honour to join with him. Did he not think then that Miniſters had neglected their duty in not attempting to negotiate? I know not, nor am I ſolicitous to know, what he thinks now. I am of opinion, and ſo I believe are the people of this country in general, that Miniſters neglected an opportunity which they fairly had to obtain peace. This Houſe thought there was a fair opportunity for that purpoſe when the honourable gentleman's motion was made. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, perceiving this, indulged the Houſe by allowing it to expreſs a wiſh for peace, but, by an artful trick, prevailed upon the Houſe to adopt certain words in their reſolutions, by which it was left to the King's Miniſters to judge "whether France was in a ſituation capable of maintaining the accuſtomed relations of peace and amity with other powers?" Will any man ſay he believes that France was not at that very moment capable of maintaining peace with any power with which it ſhould conclude a treaty? Does any man doubt that the French were then as capable of maintaining peace as any power in this world? Was it not then apparent to all Europe? I am not bound to form a comparative opinion between the power of France to maintain peace at that time and at this; but if I was bound, I ſhould ſay that they were more ſo at that period than they are at this moment, or were laſt ſummer, when our Miniſters attempted to negotiate with them: therefore upon their own principle, Miniſters have neglected an opportunity to obtain peace. Why then am I compelled to lay down my carriage? Why am I compelled to diſcharge my ſervants? Why am I compelled to turn away my labourers? Why am I to deprive my wife and family of their comforts? Why are the manufacturers and artiſans of this country ſtarving? Why are the middle claſs of ſociety to be reduced to poverty; Becauſe the French attacked us in 1792, and ſent away Lord Malmeſbury in 1797? No! but becauſe the King's Miniſters did not chuſe to ſay in 1795 that the French were capable of maintaining peace and amity with other powers. So that all your happineſs or comfort, and for ought I know, your exiſtence, is made to depend upon the opinion of the

King's Miniſters, and that too when ſuch opinion was contrary to that of all the reſt of Europe. For this are we to be aſſeſſed and mulct, and robbed and plundered, more than any nation, not in a ſtate of Revolution, ever was upon earth.

We are all agreed that great exertions are neceſſary, but differ about the means. My opinion is moſt clear that great exertions muſt now be made; my opinion is as clear that ſuch exertions cannot be made while thoſe Miniſters, who have ſo abuſed their power, continue to poſſeſs it; and on account of whoſe negligence ariſes the very queſtion which is now before you. But it ſeems we ſhould now be unanimous; and gentlemen on the oppoſite ſide ſay, that "my ſpeeches are not calculated to produce unanimity." The beſt return to that is, "are yours ſo?" "You wiſh us to come to you. We ſay you ſhould come over to us?" "What! the majority come over to the minority?" "Yes, the majority come over to the minority." There are many gentlemen in this Houſe who have ſat upon juries. I aſk them, whether, when a jury is divided in opinion, and the caſe cannot be ſettled without a compromiſe, whether thoſe who are of the ſevere opinion do not conſtantly give way to thoſe of the milder diſpoſition? When the queſtion therefore is, whether you ſhall agree to a meaſure that is directly hoſtile to the Conſtitution, that calls upon the people to pay what they have diſtinctly told you they cannot pay, I ſay, that the majority ſhould come over to the minority. You cannot expect the confidence of the people upon your preſent ſyſtem; it has already led to too many misfortunes. I ſay the maſs of the people of England are againſt you; but were it poſſible to obtain it, would you be contented with the unanimity of the people of *Great Britain?* I ſay you ſhould have the unanimity and affection of the whole of the Britiſh empire. Look at *Ireland.* After the fatal conſequences that have enſued upon your breaking the promiſes which you authorized Lord Fitzwilliam to make, do you conceive that you will have unanimity there without Parliamentary Reform and the emancipation of the Catholics? After the inhuman dragooning and horrible executions, the recital of which makes the blood run cold; after ſo much military cruelty, not in one, but almoſt every part of the country; is it poſſible for this Adminiſtration to procure unanimity in that country? I will do them the juſtice to ſay, they do not themſelves expect it; they truſt there to the force of a military government. In this war it is ſaid, and truly, we have more acknowledged ſuperiority than ever we had, even at ſea: and yet ſuch is the general diſaffection in Ireland, and ſuch is the cauſe for general diſaffection in England, that the force for the internal defence of both, is four times

as great as when you had all France, Spain and Holland againſt you; and when they were powers independent of each other, not, as now they are, under the nod of the French Republic. Now you are forced to have large armies, not only againſt foreign nations, but alſo againſt your domeſtic enemies, as you call them, both in England and in Ireland, but moſt particularly in Ireland. In this country we are told there are many diſaffected perſons, and ſo on; and it was brought as a charge againſt me, that I ſaid I thought there was no plot againſt the Government of this country proved to exiſt. I thought in the year 1792 that the number of perſons who were diſaffected to the form of our Government was not large. I thought, with Mr. Juſtice Eyre, "that they were almoſt without numbers, without money, and even without zeal;" but I do not think now, however, that becauſe there is ſilence, therefore there is ſafety; "but you predicted that Lord Fitzwilliam's zeal would produce miſchief; nothing, for a long time after that, happened in Ireland, and therefore your prediction was wrong; Lord Fitzwilliam's recall produced nothing." Were not the ſeeds of diſaffection and revolt ſown by that recall? Have you not encouraged them to ſhoot up? Have you not nurtured them in their growth? Do you not now ſee the produce? Do you not expect ſoon to be called upon to reap the harveſt? My opinion is, that thoſe who were for a Republic in preference to a Monarchy, or who wiſhed to reduce the Monarchy to a cypher, were few at firſt. I believe they are not yet formidable in numbers: but that they are increaſed in ſuch a proportion, that if they were at firſt ſo numerous as they were ſaid to be, they would now be a dreadful body, is what I cannot hesitate to ſay. Are you now proceeding in a way to reduce their number? Do you expect to make men love the Monarchy of this country by confuſion, confiſcation and military cruelty? When men reaſon, or think they reaſon, upon any ſubject, you muſt treat even their prejudices with tenderneſs. You are now a divided and diſcontented people. What is your remedy? A change of ſyſtem. A Miniſtry that ſhall give confidence to the French, not that confidence which *they* with, but the confidence which *we* wiſh, a confidence that we have a Miniſtry capable of commanding the unanimous affections of the people of Great Britain, and the people of Ireland. This can be obtained only by an entire change of ſyſtem, by a correction of abuſes, by a Parliamentary Reform, and above all, by allowing the people their juſt balance in your political ſcale—that is the way to unite their affections, and to make the whole maſs of them as it were one man, fixed and determined on his object, and that object his country's glory. That is the way to diſplay the real beau-

ties of our Conſtitution; the true old Britiſh Conſtitution. Shew the people that their Conſtitution is not paper and packthread; but that it is capable of procuring for them real, ſolid bleſſings; not a Conſtitution that permits confiſcation, proſcription, plunder and military execution; not a Conſtitution under which thoſe only can go on with the war who are hated and condemned by the people; not a Conſtitution under which the multitude are preſſed almoſt to death, while others ſmile and bear no part of the burden—I ſee here the impropriety of not having an example from the higheſt authority to encourage us to bear our burdens. A learned gentleman alluded to the caſe of the people of Rome when they were oppreſſed. They ſaid to their rulers, "you may beat us with ſtripes, but you cannot take from us that which we have not"—what did the people of high rank in Rome do? They made the greateſt ſacrifices they could to ſhew the people they were willing to bear their ſhare of the burdens; they did not leave themſelves any gold or ſilver, except for the ſake of diſtinction, viz. a gold fringe for the Patrician youth, and earrings and necklaces for the Roman matrons. I aſk for no ſuch ſacrifices, I only aſk that thoſe who have the higheſt prerogatives, privileges and immunities, ſhould not be wholly exempted from theſe burdens, and ſtand aloof from the ſcene of action. I only aſk that ſome ſacrifices ſhould be made; to what extent I ſhould leave to the good ſenſe and honourable feelings of others.

But it is ſaid that this bill will give no additional influence to the Crown. I do not mean to inſinuate that Miniſters intend it ſhould; on the contrary, I acquit them of any ſuch intention; but that it will have that effect is moſt clear, and it is unavoidable. It will add more to the influence of the Crown than any other meaſure that has been adopted in the courſe of the preſent war. I think I know what I am ſaying upon this ſubject, having had a great deal of experience upon it in the courſe of ſo many repeated canvaſſes for the ſuffrages of the electors of the city and liberty of Weſtminſter. If the caſe ſhould be, as I am afraid it will, that when the contribution is due, hardly any man can pay it, what are you to do? Would you caſt every defaulter into priſon, or diſtrain upon his goods? No, there will be ſome indulgence. That muſt be, in the nature of the thing, diſcretionary, and thus every man muſt be, more or leſs, under the power of the tax collector; that collector muſt, from the nature of his office, be connected with Government. Thoſe who canvaſs at elections will find a vaſt number of men who have very decided opinions againſt Adminiſtration, but who are afraid of doing any thing that may diſoblige thoſe who have influence with the Executive Power. I do not ſay that this is the de-

ſire of Miniſters. I do not think it is: but I do ſay that this will be the inevitable conſequence of it; for a prodigious number of men will be aware that they muſt either vote for a Court candidate, againſt their conſcience, or be ruined. What, then, is the reſult of all this? Why, that the Crown will have, by this bill, an immenſe power, in addition to that enormous influence which it already has in this Houſe, and which has been the ſource of all your evils; and which has made you a mockery of the public voice—I ſay, put an end to all theſe unſeemly appearances. Recur to your good old Engliſh Conſtitution. Make the Crown what it ought to be; what the Conſtitution intended it to be, the guardian of the rights and liberties of the ſubjects; not the object of their jealouſy and alarm, ſuch as I have no heſitation in pronouncing it now to be. I aſk you to examine with attention the hiſtory of this country, and to reflect upon it; you will ſee that all its calamities have been chiefly owing to that ſyſtem which tends to increaſe the influence of the Crown, and to encroach upon the rights of the people; a ſyſtem that muſt end either in ſlavery or revolt. But when we examine the courſe of this war, and the train of evils which it has already brought upon us; when we ſee the contemptible ignorance of the greater part, the indifference of others, of thoſe who generally compoſe what is called the Court party, concerning the Rights and Liberties of the People, and of the means to procure them happineſs, when we ſee what deſcription of perſons they are, naturally, from their ignorance and folly, led to protect and encourage; when we ſee that it is a part of their ſyſtem to excuſe from all burden thoſe who ought to be the moſt ready to bear it; we are naturally led, I think, to call for a radical and fundamental change of ſyſtem, as well as of the Miniſters who have acted under it, and who have brought you to your preſent moſt calamitous condition. I wiſh this country to manifeſt its ſtrength to the world at large, and moſt emphatically to the enemy. I know that cannot be done without large ſupplies; but all our ſupplies muſt be *voluntary*; in that has conſiſted the very eſſence of our country's glory, in that has conſiſted the difference between us and other nations, and has ſo often exalted us above them all, in faith, in credit, in honour, in every thing that conſtitutes the greatneſs of a people. It is in that, too, has conſiſted the difference between the meaſures adopted in this and other wars, and which reveals the myſtery of your preſent diſtreſs. What is the remedy? A radical reform, a total change of ſyſtem; but above all, a Parliament that ſhall be known, felt, and acknowledged, to ſpeak the voice of the People. I remember how beau-

tifully this point was illuſtrated by Mr. Burke in his celebrated ſpeech for conciliation with the colonies, the ſubſtance of which was, (ſpeaking of the caſes of Wales and Cheſter), That the march of the human mind was ſlow; that it was not, until after two hundred years, diſcovered, that by an eternal law, Providence had decreed vexation to violence, and poverty to rapine; that our anceſtors did, however, at length open their eyes to the ill huſbandry of injuſtice. They found that the tyranny of a free people could of all tyrannies the leaſt be endured, and that laws made againſt a whole nation were not the moſt effectual methods for ſecuring its obedience. Accordingly, in the twenty-ſeventh year of Henry the Eighth, the courſe was entirely altered; with a preamble, ſtating the entire and perfect rights of the Crown of England, it gave to the Welſh all the rights and privileges of Engliſh ſubjects. A political order was eſtabliſhed; the military power gave way to the civil; the marches were turned into counties. But that a nation ſhould have a right to Engliſh liberties, and yet no ſhare at all in the fundamental ſecurity of theſe liberties, the grant of their own property, ſeemed a thing ſo incongruous, that eight years after, that is, in the thirty-fifth of that reign, a complete, and not ill-proportioned, repreſentation by counties and boroughs was beſtowed upon Wales by act of Parliament. From that moment, as by a charm, the tumults ſubſided, obedience was reſtored; peace, order, and civilization, followed in the train of liberty. When the day-ſtar of the Engliſh Conſtitution had ariſen in their hearts, all was harmony within and without.

Simul alba nautis
Stella refulſit
Defluit ſaxis agitatus humor;
Concidunt venti, fugiuntque nubes:
Et minax (quod ſic voluere) ponto
Unda recumbit.

This is ſaying, that it is a divine principle which God and Nature have planted in the human character; ſo that it is there, and there only, can be true ſecurity for ſocial bleſſings, where there is a true Repreſentation of the People. By this he has ſaid more in favour of a Repreſentative Government, (I do not mean a Repreſentative Government in the ſenſe which ſome invidious perſons are ready to impute to me, but a true Repreſentation of the People in this Houſe,) than is contained in ſome whole volumes that have been written upon the ſubject. You know what has paſſed in Ireland upon the ſubject of a corrupt Parliament. It is good for us to

have a magnifying glaſs through which ſuch an object may be viewed, becauſe it enables us to ſee its deformity the more diſtinctly. Mr. Grattan ſtated plainly, "that Peerages were ſold in Ireland to thoſe who ſent Members into the Houſe of Commons to vote for Government." Was that denied? Not a word of it; ſomething of that kind was ſtated by my honourable friend (Mr. Tierney), not very ambiguouſly either, applying to the ſpecific caſe of a certain Peer lately created. Was that denied this night? No notice taken of it. Will you then perſiſt in paſſing a bill which the whole metropolis, called upon to pay one-fourth of it, unanimouſly diſapprove? Yes, I believe you will, in utter defiance of the public voice. Am I then unreaſonable in my declaration, that I will not attend this Houſe, when I am ſo confident I cannot do good? The beſt thing I can do is to draw the attention of the people to the Houſe of Commons; let them ſee what paſſes here, who they are who ſit and act here; then let them decide whether they are repreſented here or not. I do not wiſh to have any ſhare in directing their anger, much leſs to inflame their paſſions, although it is ſaid that much artifice is employed for that purpoſe. There was a diviſion here ſome time ago, and there were two hundred and odd againſt fifteen. I do not mean to detract from the abilities of that minority, eſpecially thoſe of my honourable friends who ſpoke to-night, but they will forgive me, if I ſay, that the public abhorrence of this bill is not the effect of their eloquence. It is owing to the intrinſic iniquity of the bill itſelf, which is moſt evident from the fact that almoſt all the reſolutions of all the pariſhes were entered into before any thing, or before much, had been ſaid in Parliament againſt it. I know we are in a ſituation to which the wiſdom of our Miniſters is not adequate. I will go farther, and ſay, that the wiſdom of no man, or body of men, is equal to it; nor ever will be ſo upon your preſent plan of politics. We muſt have the advice of the people collected and expreſſed freely and liberally. Our baſis muſt be made much broader than it is at preſent. We muſt give to the people their due ſhare in the Government, we muſt let them know and feel that they are fighting for their own rights and for their own ſovereignty, againſt foreign nations, and fighting for that liberty which no foreign nation can give. You can do nothing by ſaying in this Houſe, "this or that is the opinion of the people," but you ſhould have that opinion from themſelves freely expreſſed, by a true, *ſubſtantial*, as well as a *virtual* repreſentation of the people. Not by univerſal ſuffrage, in my opinion, but upon a ſcale ſhort of that, but, with that limitation, as large as it

is otherwiſe poſſible. Theſe are the only means to ſhew the real ſtrength of this country. By theſe means you will neither have nor want ſo many mercenary troops as you have at preſent, but you will poſſeſs a much more important force to aſſert and protect your freedom.

Copy of a Letter from Earl Moira to Lieutenant-colonel M'Mahon.

My dear Colonel, *Dorrington, June* 15, 1797.

The information which you have given to me of the reports circulating with regard to the late political negociations, is in one reſpect material. It confirms a ſuſpicion which had occurred to me that it was an object to have me thought diſpoſed towards ſuch a coalition:—And the Oracle, which I had not ſeen before you tranſmitted it, exceedingly ſtrengthened the ſuppoſition. If I have left room for thoſe erroneous ſtatements by not proclaiming to all the world the arrangements that were in view, it did not proceed from my not having taken a preciſe and defined line; ſtill leſs did it ariſe from any notion of advantage in *concealment*; for the gentlemen with whom I conferred had not any purpoſe which they wiſhed to diſguiſe; and I ſtrongly urged them not to give any appearance of intrigue to the buſineſs by any affectation of *ſecrecy*. Indeed, I know that ſome of them declared their intentions very openly to the *perſons moſt concerned, the Miniſters*; which, perhaps, has facilitated the attempt of throwing a colour of colluſion on the plan. My ſole reaſon for not talking more openly on what was in contemplation was, that I had declined being a principal mover in the buſineſs, and that I thought it would have been an air of vanity if I proclaimed the flattering recurrence of ſo many reſpectable characters to me. It was before Eaſter that ſome Members of the Houſe of Commons, *not thoſe who uſed to meet at Sir John Sinclair's*, ſent to aſk for an opportunity of converſing with me on political topics. When we met, they ſaid that a conſiderable number of the independent Members, who had hitherto voted with Adminiſtration, ſaw with exceſſive alarm the difficulties into which the country had been plunged, and which could not but increaſe rapidly, unleſs an adequate remedy were immediately applied. They added, that they had reflected on the nature of that remedy, and were convinced that a change of Miniſtry muſt be the firſt ſtep towards it; in conſequence of which they had communed together, and had determined to fix their confidence upon me. They then requeſted that I would endeavour, on the aſſurance of their ſupport, to form an adminiſtration on the principles of excluding perſons who had on either ſide made themſelves obnoxious to the public. As I ſaw the dangers of the country in the ſame light that they did, and believed that nothing could diſpel them but the calling forth the general confidence of the nation, I could not diſſent from the theory of their plan: The execution of it, however, I deemed

impracticable; I ſtated to them the impoſſibility of their overpowering the adherents of both Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox: On which account I ſtrenuouſly recommended that they ſhould attempt to form with Mr. Fox's party an alliance that might be ſatisfactory to themſelves and to the country; by diſcuſſing, and, when accepted, reducing to ſtrict engagement, the extent of meaſures which Mr. Fox when brought into office by them would propoſe. The gentlemen ſaid, that many of their friends had taken ſo ſtrong a part againſt Mr. Fox, and others had ſuch a prejudice againſt him, that they had not any hope of bringing my propoſition to bear with them. I repeated my reaſoning as earneſtly as poſſible, and prevailed upon thoſe gentlemen to ſay they would recommend the ſuggeſtion to the conſideration of their comrades. I preſſed the counſel upon many of them individually afterwards; and I went out of town. Public matters growing more gloomy in their aſpect every day, I received letters from ſome of thoſe gentlemen containing ſuch remonſtrances on my abſence, that I returned directly to London. The perſons with whom I had before conferred, came to me as ſoon as they heard I was arrived. They told me the repugnance of their party to Mr. Fox was invincible; but that a ſenſe of the extreme peril to which the ſtate was expoſed, had become ſo general, as to make it clear, that a majority of the Houſe of Commons would be for a new Adminiſtration; and they produced a *very long liſt, indeed, of Members*, containing men of the greateſt weight in the country, who wiſhed that I ſhould ſtand at their head. I explained to the gentlemen that to make myſelf the chief of a party would no more ſuit me than it would become them to enroll themſelves under me—that though I muſt be flattered very highly as being thought by ſuch perſonages equal to the guidance of affairs in ſo formidable a criſis, the ſituation to which they deſtined me was moſt ineligible for me—that I would, notwithſtanding, not ſhrink from it, if my acceptance of it would be regarded by his Majeſty as an act of duty, and by the public as an act of zeal—that to enſure ſuch a conſtruction, I muſt not enter into any management or intrigue; but that the buſineſs muſt be done by their open and manly declaration of what they thought neceſſary for the public intereſt in ſuch an exigency. I ſuſpect that Mr. Fox obtained information of the ſentiments of theſe gentlemen, and thence, *with that elevated diſintereſtedneſs, and honeſt anxiety for the national welfare, which guides all his actions*, determined by the ſacrifice of his own pretenſions to remove every obſtacle from an arrangement which he thought might be productive of good to the country. This ſtep did indeed appear to forward the views of the independent Members: For it ſeemed to call upon Miniſters to ſhew an equal degree of public ſpirit, and to retire from ſtations which they could no longer fill with benefit to the empire. *It was underſtood that they felt it ſo:* And on that ſuppoſition the independent Members made a more pointed application to me. Hitherto, nobody has been deſignated for any particular office but Sir William Pulteney. The gentlemen had ſaid that he was the perſon whom they ſhould be moſt gratified in ſeeing Chancellor of the Exchequer: And I had profeſſed to them and to him that there was not any perſon with whom I could act more confidently. From what I have mentioned, however, you will ſee that it was not in the contemplation of my friends to have an Adminiſtration formed by a junction with the majority of the preſent Cabinet. One perſon, indeed, had obſerved to me, that, if Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville were diſplaced, the remainder of the Cabinet would ſuit my purpoſes as well as any men that I could find: But I directly met that ſuggeſtion, by a declaration, that nothing could induce

me to go into office upon terms of that nature. The introduction of Lord Thurlow, Sir William Pulteney, and myſelf into that Cabinet, could not *aſſure the Public* of a CHANGE OF SYSTEM: And it was neceſſary that in the very outſet, the confidence of the Public ſhould attach itſelf to our principles; I would therefore have nothing equivocal. Without meaning to proſcribe individuals, there are certain points with which one muſt not palter. *I cannot ever ſit in a Cabinet with the Duke of Portland. He appears to me to have done more injury to the Conſtitution, and to the eſtimation of the higher ranks in this country, than any man on the political ſtage.* By his union with Mr. Pitt, he has given it to be underſtood by the people, that either all the conſtitutional changes which he and his friends for ſo many years urged againſt Mr. Pitt were groundleſs, or that being ſolid, there was no difficulty in waving them *when a convenient partition of power and emoluments was propoſed.* In either caſe the people muſt infer that the conſtitutional principle which can be ſo played with, is unimportant; and that Parliamentary profeſſions are no ſecurity. Were I to connect myſelf with the Duke of Portland, I muſt incur the imputation of ſimilar laxity; and I muſt thereby forfeit any claim to a confidence, without which I could not be of any uſe; when nothing but the hope of being of uſe could make me for a moment liſten to a propoſal for undertaking office. *My wiſh was to procure for colleagues many of thoſe who had been acting in concert with Mr. Fox:* And it was obvious that the ſtep which he had taken was generouſly intended to leave them at liberty to join as unconnected individuals in a new Adminiſtration. In this my friends, of whom not one aimed at office, entirely concurred, ſaying, that if I continued reſponſible to them for meaſures, I might take what men I choſe. Thoſe meaſures had been readily adjuſted between us: for when I detailed to thoſe gentlemen the plan on which alone I would undertake the management of affairs, we found that our ſentiments agreed completely. I had ſtated that I muſt decline coming in, unleſs His Majeſty ſhould graciouſly conſent to theſe three conditions:—*An endeavour to procure immediate Peace—the tranquilliſation of Ireland by a juſt and lenient ſyſtem of Government—and a full diſcloſure to the Nation as to the extent of our financial difficulties*, in order to juſtify the call for thoſe heavy contributions that would be requiſite to reeſtabliſh credit. Of my friends, I demanded this condition: That no removals ſhould be made in the Houſehold, Poſt-Office, Mint, or any other department not immediately connected with Miniſterial function. To this they moſt readily aſſented. My view was, *to profeſs that I would not form to myſelf a party;* and that, as I had merely from the critical ſituation of public affairs conſented to undertake a buſineſs foreign to the line of life which I had propoſed to myſelf, I ſhould conſider it a fortunate releaſe whenſoever His Majeſty or Parliament ſhould think ſome other perſon fitter for the ſtation. With the meaſures by which the change of Adminiſtration was to be brought about, I was to have no concern. The ſentiment of the independent Members was indeed ſubmitted through me, as ſome channel was neceſſary for the tranſmiſſion of their joint opinions. But in this I took no farther part. In purſuance of my ſyſtem I declined remaining in London; leſt from conſtant communications, the matter ſhould degenerate into political intrigue. I have given you this long detail that you may be empowered to contradict any miſtatement that you hear: *And you are perfectly welcome to ſhew this letter to any reſpectable man of any party;* as there was not a point throughout the buſineſs, which I, or any of thoſe with whom I conferred, *need wiſh to conceal.* Not a ſingle man of thoſe who aſſured me of their ſupport ever hinted at a private ob-

ject, much leſs ſuggeſted any thing like a condition. You ſay that Mr. Sheridan has been traduced as wiſhing to abandon Mr. Fox, and to promote a new Adminiſtration. I had accidentally a converſation with that gentleman at the Houſe of Lords. I remonſtrated ſtrongly with him againſt a principle which I heard Mr. Fox's friends intended to lay down, namely, that they would ſupport a new Adminiſtration, but that not any of them would take part in it. I ſolemnly declare upon my honour, that I could not ſhake Mr. Sheridan's aſſertion of the propriety of that determination. He ſaid that he and Mr. Fox's other friends, as well as Mr. Fox himſelf, would give the moſt energetic ſupport to ſuch an Adminiſtration as was in contemplation; but that their acceptance of office would appear an acquieſcence under the injuſtice of the interdict ſuppoſed to be fixed upon Mr. Fox. I did not, and never can, admit the fairneſs of that argument. But I gained nothing upon Mr. Sheridan; to whoſe uprightneſs in that reſpect I can therefore bear the moſt deciſive teſtimony. Indeed, I am aſhamed of offering teſtimony where ſuſpicion ought not to be conceived. I conſider the whole of this political negotiation as completely extinct; and feeling my eſcape from a hazardous and unpleaſant ſituation, I enjoy the conſciouſneſs of not having ſhrunk in an unmanly manner from any reſponſibility in a caſe where it was thought I might be uſeful to the Community.

Adieu, my dear Sir. Believe me faithfully yours,

Colonel Mc Mahon. (Signed) MOIRA.